

paragraphs (c)(2) and (c)(3) of this section, if requested in writing by an applicant or eligible individual, the State unit shall make all requested information in that individual's record of services accessible to and shall release the information to the individual or the individual's representative in a timely manner.

(2) Medical, psychological, or other information that the State unit determines may be harmful to the individual may not be released directly to the individual, but must be provided to the individual through a third party chosen by the individual, which may include, among others, an advocate, a family member, or a qualified medical or mental health professional, unless a representative has been appointed by a court to represent the individual, in which case the information must be released to the court-appointed representative.

(3) If personal information has been obtained from another agency or organization, it may be released only by, or under the conditions established by, the other agency or organization.

(4) An applicant or eligible individual who believes that information in the individual's record of services is inaccurate or misleading may request that the designated State unit amend the information. If the information is not amended, the request for an amendment must be documented in the record of services.

(d) *Release for audit, evaluation, and research.* Personal information may be released to an organization, agency, or individual engaged in audit, evaluation, or research only for purposes directly connected with the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program, or for purposes that would significantly improve the quality of life for applicants and eligible individuals and only if the organization, agency, or individual assures that—

(1) The information will be used only for the purposes for which it is being provided;

(2) The information will be released only to persons officially connected with the audit, evaluation, or research;

(3) The information will not be released to the involved individual;

(4) The information will be managed in a manner to safeguard confidentiality; and

(5) The final product will not reveal any personal identifying information without the informed written consent of the involved individual or the individual's representative.

(e) *Release to other programs or authorities.* (1) Upon receiving the informed written consent of the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative, the State unit may release personal information to another agency or organization for its program purposes only to the extent that the information may be released to the involved individual or the individual's representative and only to the extent that the other agency or organization demonstrates that the information requested is necessary for its program.

(2) Medical or psychological information that the State unit determines may be harmful to the individual may be released if the other agency or organization assures the State unit that the information will be used only for the purpose for which it is being provided and will not be further released to the individual.

(3) The State unit shall release personal information if required by Federal law or regulations.

(4) The State unit shall release personal information in response to investigations in connection with law enforcement, fraud, or abuse, unless expressly prohibited by Federal or State laws or regulations, and in response to an order issued by a judge, magistrate, or other authorized judicial officer.

(5) The State unit also may release personal information in order to protect the individual or others if the individual poses a threat to his or her safety or to the safety of others.

(Authority: Secs. 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 711(c) and 721(a)(6)(A))

#### § 361.39 State-imposed requirements.

The State plan must assure that the designated State unit identifies upon request those regulations and policies relating to the administration or operation of its vocational rehabilitation program that are State-imposed, including any regulations or policy based

## § 361.40

## 34 CFR Ch. III (7–1–00 Edition)

on State interpretation of any Federal law, regulations, or guideline.

(Authority: Sect. 17 of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 716)

### § 361.40 Reports.

The State plan must assure that the State unit—

(a) Will submit reports in the form and detail and at the time required by the Secretary, including reports required under sections 13, 14, and 101(a)(10) of the Act; and

(b) Will comply with any requirements necessary to ensure the correctness and verification of those reports.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1820–0500)

(Authority: Sec. 101(a)(10) of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 721(a)(10))

#### STATE PLAN CONTENT: PROVISION AND SCOPE OF SERVICES

### § 361.41 Processing referrals and applications.

(a) *Referrals.* The State plan must assure that the designated State unit has established and implemented standards for the prompt and equitable handling of referrals of individuals for vocational rehabilitation services. The standards must include timelines for making good faith efforts to inform these individuals of application requirements and to gather information necessary to initiate an assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services.

(b) *Applications.* (1) The State plan must assure that once an individual has submitted an application for vocational rehabilitation services, an eligibility determination will be made within 60 days, unless—

(i) Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the agency preclude a determination within 60 days and the agency and the individual agree to a specific extension of time; or

(ii) An extended evaluation is necessary, in accordance with § 361.42(d).

(2) An individual is considered to have submitted an application when the individual or the individual's representative, as appropriate,—

(i) Has completed and signed an agency application form or has otherwise requested services;

(ii) Has provided information necessary to initiate an assessment to determine eligibility and priority for services; and

(iii) Is available to complete the assessment process.

(3) The designated State unit shall ensure that its application forms are widely available throughout the State.

(Authority: Sec. 101(a)(6)(A) and 102(a)(5)(A) of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 721(a)(6)(A) and 722(a)(5)(A))

### § 361.42 Assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services.

The State plan must assure that, in order to determine whether an individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and the individual's priority under an order of selection for services (if the State is operating under an order of selection), the designated State unit will conduct an assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services. The assessment must be conducted in the most integrated setting possible, consistent with the individual's needs and informed choice, and in accordance with the following provisions:

(a) *Eligibility requirements*—(1) *Basic requirements.* The State plan must assure that the State unit's determination of an applicant's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services is based only on the following requirements:

(i) A determination that the applicant has a physical or mental impairment.

(ii) A determination that the applicant's physical or mental impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment for the applicant.

(iii) A presumption, in accordance with paragraph (a)(2) of this section, that the applicant can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

(iv) A determination that the applicant requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter into, engage in, or retain gainful employment consistent with the applicant's